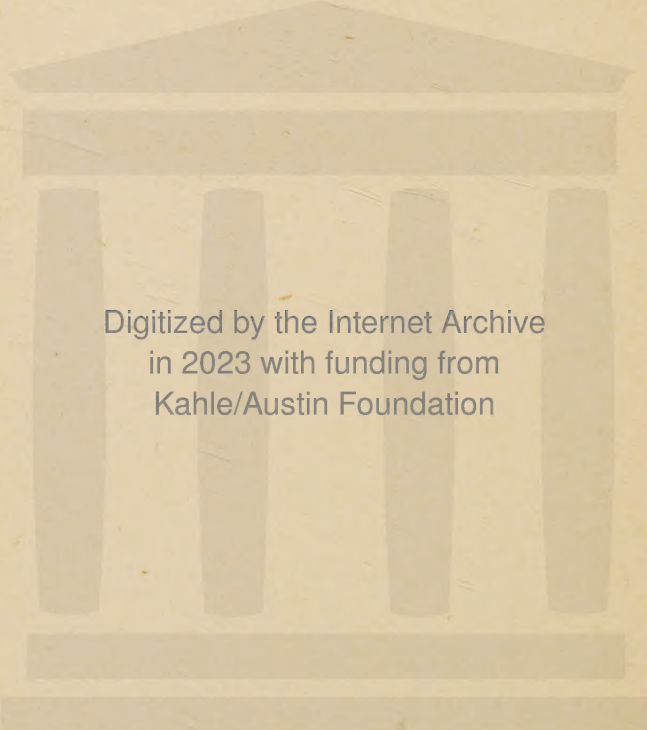


HIGH TIDE AND OTHER STORIES

GEORGE HOYT SMITH







Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2023 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

HIGH TIDE AND OTHER STORIES

h-12.57

HIGH TIDE

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

GEORGE HOYT SMITH



The Christopher Publishing House
Boston, U. S. A.

COPYRIGHT 1929
BY THE CHRISTOPHER PUBLISHING HOUSE

PRINTED IN
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

High Tide	9
On the Just and the Unjust	26
At the End of the Rainbow	38
The Isle of Somewhere	49
When Departed Spirits Staged a Return	67

High Tide and Other Stories

HIGH TIDE

More than a hundred feet above the stone-paved street the man and woman looked down. The little balcony that goes around the tower just below the four big clock dials affords a view in all directions, and standing at the east it was to see a ship making out of harbor, her white paint glistening in the morning sun.

"The boat has gone," she said; her voice scarce more than a whisper.

"Yes;" he said and, as she leaned forward, restrained her, adding "not yet, and only together."

They stood, very close; looking out—out and yet not seeing the landscape spread before them.

Down on Meeting Street a straggler noting figures on the balcony, their white clothes silhouetted against the black face of the clock, remarked to himself; "tourists climbing the tower early today."

But Robert Hart and Alicia Curtiss were late rather than early—very late. In fact almost at the end of their day.

*

*

*

*

Alicia Curtiss and Robert Hart had found themselves invited to sit at the captain's table the first night out of New York. The tall, slender, dark-eyed girl seemed depressed, although trying with some degree of success to be amiable. Her splendid health

was evident—the shadow which fitfully played over her features could not conceal the grace and attractiveness of womanhood reached under friendly conditions. An athletic girl, who could wear French heels as comfortably as tennis shoes, and appear charming in evening gown or sweater . . . She was going South, to join her father, in Florida.

Hart, a sturdy product of New England, an engineer, sometime successful in construction projects in various sections of the country, was also bound for Florida; carrying in his suitcase a very satisfactory contract and in his head many ideas.

"Miss Curtiss," said the captain, nodding towards the man who had come into the dining saloon and paused at the chair next to her's; "This is Bob Hart—but he isn't all that. Some brains too, I think—and a good voice; so I've been told," then smiling to note others who had come to the table.

A glance only had been necessary to suggest to the two just introduced at the captain's left, that chance had been kind. And then, conversation, which mainly serves to mask one's thoughts, took up the day, its incidents and prospects.

"Going to Florida," he said, when the weather and the ship had been properly discussed.

"Yes," she said, while a shadow that could have been from a gull's wing, passing outside the ports, fell and transformed her face. Almost instantly she added:

"I am going to Florida, to be married . . . My father and brothers are there—and my fiance." . . .

After dinner it was most natural for Hart to follow Miss Curtiss to the Lounge, and from there to the upper deck.

"Come in, later," the captain had said as he passed them, on his way to the Pilot House . . . "I'll be in my rooms soon; maybe we can get up a game of bridge."

But Hart and Miss Curtiss lingered on deck, watching the bow of the ship as it cut the waters

into great lace curtains of wonderful design, rising and falling rhythmically.

The sunset, the fading shore, with its strings of lights—the Jersey coast, Atlantic City, the last of the twinkling electrics,—an occasional vessel passing north; kept everybody on deck until the night was well along.

It was unconventional perhaps, but hands touched as Hart said "good night." He had asked her to linger and greet Lady Moon, due to rise from the waters at nine—but Miss Curtiss plead fatigue.

"I'm not good company tonight," she said, and the shadow flashed again. "Tomorrow, perhaps, we shall meet at breakfast; that is, if you rise early. I have been used to tennis before coffee." . . . This with a little laugh that was almost a sigh. "I guess I'll have to do without tennis tomorrow—but I'll be up . . ."

And at breakfast they had the table to themselves for the captain did not come down, and the others were enjoying a late nap.

Alicia had not slept well; yet her abundant health and vivacity triumphed over circumstances. Dark eyes conceal so much, they are most dangerous, some think. Yet she had warned Bob Hart. Fully and frankly.

And through the long, June day they were together

"I am going to Tampa," she told him, that night, when in the lee of a life boat they had watched the white caps waving to each other over the dark waters in the merry dance of time, and to the music of a stiff breeze from the east.

"To Tampa;"—she seemed to be talking a thousand miles away—"and slavery!"

It was wrong; unspeakably wrong; but Hart had gained and held her hands, under the rough coat that was being excused as necessary to keep off the spray . . . that couldn't reach them anyway.

"Why?" he asked . . . His face was very close to

hers; for the wind was whistling through the shrouds; and their voices low.

"I must marry a cousin to whom I have been betrothed since childhood," she said . . . "Now we must go in." . . . A full, fair look into his eyes . . . and "I'm sorry for this," releasing her hands.

"Until breakfast time," he said at the entrance to the hallway "and maybe go ashore in Charleston?" But she had gone.

* * * *

A squall came up, near midnight. It was severe, although at no time dangerous to a well managed ship. Hart, partly dressed and wearing raincoat, worked his way from aft until near the windows of suite G. The ship was plunging Eastward into the teeth of the wind, the rain descending in torrents. He tapped gently on a pane and the window was almost immediately raised, an inch.

"Hope you are not worried," he said. "There's not the slightest danger—we are heading out to sea and may be through this in an hour or two."

"I'm not afraid," the answer came through the tiny space at the bottom of the window, calm and clear. . . . "But I'm glad to know that you are there." A pause as the vessel pitched forward through a huge wave, sending water high over the decks and crashing against the cabins. Then "could I come out, and face the storm; with you?"

"Not yet," said Hart. "It's too hard holding on, . . . I'll work my way to the protected deck forward and later may come back for you—unless you want to come, inside, to the Lounge? Lots of people there; most of them scared half to death."

"I'll wait," she said; and the glass came down in time to meet and resist a flood of seething waters, a wave striking the port side as the Comanchee veered a point from her course.

Hart, clinging firmly to the rail against the superstructure, lost his footing for an instant and realized that it was enough to look out for one on that side of the ship. The recoil from this wave and the answering of the vessel to the rudder, set hard a port, meant a pause before starting ahead. He noticed that the window moved again.

"Are you there," the voice, sensed rather than heard, in the din of winds and sea, racing propellers, and creaking timbers. . . .

"Yes; and all right," he said. "I'll go now. If there is any danger I'll come back for you. . . . I'm going forward now."

An hour later, the Comanchee, driven by her powerful engines through the storm, was making ten knots in the gusty open, many miles out of her course, but steadily and slowly working southeast. The sea was running high, but under a clear, moonlit sky.

Hart came back to the windows of suite G. He tapped—very gently—but there was no response.

*

*

*

*

Few passengers were in the dining saloon of the Comanchee early Saturday morning. The captain was much too busy to come down and again there were only two passengers at his table. . . . Two travellers who were not talking a great deal; neither did they seem to have appetites commensurate with their general appearance of health and disposition.

"I wanted to come out to you last night;" she said, "but you said, no."

"I wanted you—but did what was best," the man said; earnestly, looking deep into the dark eyes that seemed full of meaning, but forbidding its release. "I want you, always," he added; it was almost a song, so musical and pleading. The busy waiter who had tried to get them something tempting, never understood . . . more than that it must have been a compliment.

"O, please; please;" she said, with a glance such as could come only from a tortured soul . . . "Don't; please don't."

"Very well;" he said, as they made their way to ask the captain of the storm. "I need not talk at all. You know what I think about this wretched business. . . . I wish to God that this was the first instead of the nineteenth century; I'd take you—maybe by that soft, black hair of your head—and drag you away to my cave; and God help man or beast that tried to take you from me!"

She laughed a little. He was so tragic; a boastful boy—despite his five feet ten and thirty years.

"Women of the nineteenth century are not dragged about, sir;" she said with mock severity; "you would have some fun trying to take me anywhere I didn't want to go" . . . "and you will behave very properly and pleasantly when meeting my folks at Jacksonville; where my father will thank you for being nice to me, on the trip. . . He is coming up to take me back in his car." . . . They were on the bridge now, and in the eyes that met his, Hart seemed to read a challenge—yet he dared not interpret it.

*

*

*

*

It was along in the afternoon when the Comanche docked at Charleston.

"We will be here all night, said the captain. "That squall forced us out to sea and there's a big cargo to be put off." A notice posted later on deck read: "S. S. Comanche sails for Jacksonville at 7 A. M."

Many of the through passengers went ashore to look about the lovely old City by the Sea soon after the ship reached the pier, but Hart and Miss Curtiss remained on board until after dinner. It would be cooler, it had been said, and it was near seven when, all in white, they went down the gangway.

Passing through the great warehouse on the pier it was to watch for a few moments the singing, sweating crowd of laborers, darting in and out of the ship's hold, bringing great boxes and bales and barrels of goods to be piled high on all sides.

"I wonder if they are happy?" Alicia said. . . Her voice implied doubt.

"Happy!" echoed Hart. "The happiest people on earth. They are creatures of impulse. They live; without asking whence they came or how; they work, they eat, they love, they sleep—and the next day takes care of itself.

"Fatalists; these black and brown men she said.

"Perhaps that is it; and are we the better off? For worrying over tomorrow—or next year?"

Out on Bay Street, the wholesale district, deserted on Saturday afternoon; through Broad Street, where financiers and lawyers and brokers carry on from nine 'til three; scarcely less quiet. Now and then a street car rounded the old exchange building corner and went either towards the residence section, westward, or to the ferry wharves, on the east. . . Passing along, the couple in white arrived at the big church whose spire and clock they had seen from the deck of the ship.

"This old church was a target during the civil war," said Hart. "Queer wasn't it that Christians

could thus seek to destroy a temple erected to their God. . . . I've read that Federal guns on outlying islands were aimed at this white tower—what must have been the feelings of the gunners?"

"Let's not discuss faith, or consistency," said the woman. "Each is a matter of convenience, with the multitude. . . . I try to understand and fail."

While the huge doors of the church, under the portico on Meeting Street, were closed, a smaller door, on Broad stood open. There was no one by. Stepping inside a stairway seemed to invite further inspection . . . and with no let or hindrance, they went on.

"I have often heard of the wonderful view from the tower," said Hart. "Shall we go up?"

"Yes;" said the woman. "I have also heard about the view; but I seem to recall someone saying that there was a guide—and a fee for the trip."

"Nobody in sight," said Hart as they turned the first stairway. "We'll see about that later."

It was at the bellfry that a halt was made. It had been somewhat of a climb so far; but here in the octagon room, above the church roof, the great chime of bells were rigidly suspended from timbers, immovable and silent until struck by dangling clappers, brought sharply against their sides by ropes through pulleys, and extending to a space below. Here was a stairway that more closely resembled a ladder than anything else, which passed directly over the bells at a sharp angle, to a higher floor.

"Lord Chesterfield told his son to invariably precede a lady ascending the stairs," remarked Hart; but perhaps I had better reverse the order here."

"It's awfully steep," said his companion. But she started quickly and he followed. Half-way up and the man knew that it had been wise to follow rather than lead. The bells announced seven-thirty with a clamor that caused Alicia to start violently, but she very soon went on.

At the clock balcony they came out into the light and stood for a moment entranced by the wonderful scene unfolded before and around them. North, south, east, west, the setting sun was glorifying every tree on land and reflecting every flash of blue waters of bay and rivers. It was brilliant; time for the nonce forgotten.

But the bells rang again.

"We should be going back," declared Alicia. "Perhaps they close the church at dark."

A moment longer—Hart was for just another look; and then down, down over the great bells . . . to find the door to the bell-ringer's room closed!

A rough-fashioned door of oak; thick, close-fitting; uncompromising.

"My God!" said the woman; her voice a wailing cry. "It can't be; it can't be, that we are locked in!"

Beating upon the planking with his hands, Hart called out, loudly—to realize almost at once the futility of these demonstrations. The caretaker had gone; and carefully locked the door that led to the last stairway. In the now rapidly fading light he could see that Alicia was almost choking with sobs that she strove to control.

"You did not plan this," she said under her breath; convulsive and violent. "You couldn't have been so cruel—so brutal—"

"You know I did not," he said. Calm in contrast; but no less impressive and convincing. Hurt by the insinuation, yet appreciating the situation. "But I'll go to the gallery again, and attract attention of people on the street—I'll go at once," turning to find her already on the steps.

"You'll not go alone," she said . . . "I'm not afraid; I never was afraid in my life . . . But this is my affair as well as yours . . . I can climb and we will both call for help."

Once more on the balcony below the dials the two figures in white stood and sought to draw notice

from the passers on the streets below. They called, each using the voice as best they thought to reach the ground, and sometimes blending their call. . . . An occasional street car or other vehicle passed along. . . . Few figures came into view.

A negro fisherman ambling slowly down Broad Street towards the Bay evidently thought he heard some noise overhead, and his eyes—strong through a life on the water—bulged as he noted white figures, moving across the big black dial. Certain he had seen ghosts he quickened his pace to a run, and told great tales to his credulous hearers on lower Market Street later.

"This does no good," said Hart finally, after a particularly strenuous effort; his voice was now husky, but his decision was not from exhaustion. "The church building cuts us off from any close attention. . . . There is another gallery, above this one. Perhaps from that we could better be seen. . . . and maybe even heard . . ."

Many travellers know the stairway that leads from the lower to the upper balcony in St. Michaels tower. It was built more than a hundred years ago of heavy, triangular cypress blocks, set around an iron post, maybe forty feet high. A little light comes in at the top from a tiny window in the broad daylight. Now it was without a gleam.

Half way up Hart knew that Alicia had stopped. He was very close.

"I can go no further," she said.

"And perhaps we could gain nothing by going," the man replied . . . and in the darkness she felt his warm breath on her cheek. . . . She moved, as though to descend—but there is no passing on that stair . . . His arms, that had been assisting; crushed her in an embrace that forced a cry . . . but there was no resistance . . . In the dark, unerringly, his lips met hers . . . and held as though drinking of the love that had been gathering in her young heart

since birth . . . and held for the one who needed it most . . .

A little later, in his arms, Hart carried Alicia down the winding stair to the clock balcony . . . she had fainted; and as he sat and held her, under the stars; he knew that they belonged to each other.

* * * *

The great hands of the clock moved—moved—constantly. Alicia's eyes opened—and were closed again under a soft caress. She stirred as though to rise—but the strong arms that had imprisoned her on the stair made sure that she could not escape.

"Bob," she said, using that name for the first time. "I am drifting with the tide. It is a tide of golden stars and its buoys my soul to the crest of a wave of unheard melody—I am drifting—"

Once more the arms tightened about her and words—mere words—are drowned in love draughts that intoxicate while indelibly teaching the lesson of life, that endures through death.

* * * *

Daylight steals in from the sea islands. . . . On the clock balcony of the big white church a man sits leaning against the tower; wrapped in his white coat a woman sleeps, her head resting in his lap.

Long hours, punctuated almost incessantly by the sounding of the bells, the pair had watched the

harbor lights—and guessed of things far and near. . . . Admitting the kingdom of love they had decided that it was complete—and, alas—that it must end with the coming day.

"It is absolutely impossible for me to go on with the program that had been planned for me," Alicia had told the man. "Mr. Wharton is a model; my father insists that he is; and he is rich and influential . . . but I love you, Bob Hart . . . You know it I am yours; yours tonight . . . wholly, absolutely, without reserve . . . it is fate . . . I would not try to change it, or deny anything . . . but tomorrow is the end of our dream. . . Yes, I mean to step over that rail, and end it all. . . I cannot live as I would live, as I know how to live . . . but I can die . . ."

"And if you go, I will go with you," he said. "I would to God that things could have been different—some things—but let's forget tomorrow. You and I; let's be primitive, man and woman, and live for the hour. Time and eternity are but figures of speech . . . there must be a reincarnation and you and I know each other in the new world."

Late, very late, Alicia, becoming accustomed to the bells, slept; and under the stars Bob Hart dreamed with his eyes wide, somehow content in the present; refusing to think further on . . .

And the sun came up, and made wonderful pictures on the land and the waters all about. The city awoke very slowly. Out onto the bay little queer-rigged fishing boats were scudding, away to the blackfish banks. Early cars, the slight patronage accorded suggesting that they were not greatly needed, wound around the streets. There were no street cries—it was Sunday.

Then softly, as the call to a child at morn, the bells in the steeple took on a different strain. Alicia still slept—but Hart heard and it seemed like a message, distinct, personal in its appeal. The bells were whispering that familiar, old hymn tune he had heard many a time;

A charge to keep I have;
A God to glorify;

The bells sounded as though a thousand miles away, yet he knew they were but fifty feet below him. They sang again:

Joy to the world,
The Lord has come."

He couldn't realize it—but the bell-ringer was practicing. Those who have lived in the near neighborhood of the church have often heard these preliminary, musical efforts. In the room below the bells, where Hart and Alicia had found the oaken door barred, the bell-ringer was touching the long levers gently.

At seven the last echoes of the hour-bell were still in the air when the chimes pealed out, the man at the levers putting force into his work. Out over the sleeping city in sonorous tones the call was being made to early service.

Alicia, opening her eyes at this, looked up into the face of the man who had won and held her in the hours past . . . A flood of memories brought the tide of color to her cheeks. The pulsating melody of the bells seemed to give her sudden strength and she stood up . . . moving toward the low rail . . . A firm hand convinced her that she must wait yet awhile.

But it was day. The last day, according to their compact. So beautiful! And they were so young and full of life and . . . what were the bells saying now? They both heard it

A never-dying soul to save
And fit it for the sky.

Close held, her face buried on his shoulder, Alicia felt the strong arms about her; now tenderly where

some time before they seemed intent upon crushing out the life that was promised another . . . Crushing her so that the heart; rebellious and in the ecstasy of love understood leaped against his like a wild bird, fluttering at the bars of a cage.

"I can't do it;" she cried to his heart; and he heard although it was not more than a sigh. "I'm a coward . . . and everything that is wrong . . . I am afraid . . . the bells . . . they talk to me . . . I don't know what to do . . ."

"Alicia," he said; "I thought I could live enough in a night to make the leap, and now I know that it would be adding sorrow where it should not fall. . . . I am not religious; I never was, and I could not be a hypocrite . . . but we can live—we must live. God knows I love you, and always will. I want to live, and to have you; now and million years and then eternity. We can go down, and away, anywhere, but we will not go the way we planned . . . The bell-ringer will be there now; he will let us out, and we can go and find a refuge somewhere. . . ."

A hoarse whistle from the harbor attracting attention at that moment Alicia and Bob watched the Comanche as it sailed out towards Fort Sumter.

Once more Alicia's face was a study, unreadable as a closed book.

"Father will be wondering about me," she said, scarcely audible. "And I can't tell him!" It was almost a moan.

"He shall know soon," said Hart, now taking a different tone; firm and decided. "He shall know within the day that you are safe, and my own forever. But come; we must seek the bell-ringer ere he goes."

*

*

*

*

"My name is George Washington McLean Gadsden," said a dignified gray-haired negro, who had looked with amazement as the rather bedraggled couple came slowly down the bellfry steps and through the now wide open door into the room with the ropes and levers. "I wonder who you all is; and how you come to be in the steeple so early?"

"I am Robert Hart, of Boston, and this is Miss Alicia Curtiss;" the man replied. "We were on our way south; came along this way, found the door open and walked in," From his pocket he took a crisp bill, but the negro quickly waved that back.

"No-sir—no sir; I'm colored, and was born a slave; but I'm proud, sir. I've been playing these chimes for thirty years, sir, and asks nothing of nobody . . . But excuse me, sir. You say you just come in; I opened that door myself sir; not twenty minutes ago. I locked it last night a little after seven o'clock."

"We know that very well," said Hart. "It was last night that we came here."

"And you all's been here all night?"

"Yes."

"Hm;" the negro said, coughing to gain time to think. "That's too bad; too bad," he added. "Guess you'd better see the sexton as you go out; yes sir," and the old bell-ringer turned to his levers and sent out clear and strong across the city and over the blue waters about it, the message

There is a fountain,
Filled with blood;
Drawn from Emanuel's veins.

"Now I know I should have done what I meant to do," said the woman, flushed and trembling under the scrutiny of the bell ringer and dreading what might be in store. "I can't bear much more of this."

The Sexton was busy in some other part of the church when the couple came down the last stair—

there was a momentary pause, and then, as they stepped towards the open door to the street—into which they had passed twelve hours before, they were startled by a voice, quite near.

It was the rector. He had noticed the couple coming down the stairs and was interested. It was against the rules to admit visitors to the tower at that hour—and besides, they appeared much disturbed.

"Will you come into the vestry a moment, please," he said, and it seemed more like a command than an invitation, although the voice was full and kind. They followed him into the little room, just off the chancel, and at his indication, took seats.

The tall, white-bearded man in black sat and listened attentively as Hart told of the harmless intrusion that had resulted in imprisonment for the night. He closed his eyes as Hart ceased speaking, and remained silent for a brief space then said, as though the subject had been romance instead of adventure or curiosity;

"And were you two children looking forward to marriage, now or later?"

"I was on my way to Florida to marry another man," Alicia said quickly, talking low and yet determined to be heard. Her lips were tense, her words hard and cold. "I didn't want to marry him . . . and now . . . I can't . . . I never loved him."

"And do you love this man?" The venerable priest had come over to Alicia and laying a fatherly hand upon her shoulder, added, "and could you marry him—and does he wish it?" this last inquiry directed toward Hart.

"Yes," she said, almost in a whisper.

"Yes, indeed," said Hart . . . Last night I thought that an hour of love would end at dawn. I didn't care. . . Now I know that a lifetime can only be the real beginning of love."

"For thirty years," said the rector, I followed the

sea, and many's the night as I stood at the wheel or the ropes the waters seemed certain to destroy my ship. . . . But of all the tides there is none to compare with that of desire; no storm of sea or land is equal to that of passion—and these we seek to control."

Turning to the vestry door, this splendid captain of life and pilot of a thousand emergencies, called in the sexton."

"Mr. A," he said, pleasantly, as though the hour had brought nothing unusual into his view, "This is Miss Curtiss, of Florida, and Mr. Hart, of Boston, and they are anxious to be married. . . . They are going south this afternoon. . . . They would like to have you as a witness to the ceremony."

ON THE JUST AND THE UNJUST

Mrs. Bardeen, who lived over to the west side of town a few blocks from Main Street, had sent Hannah, the cook, to the grocery store "in a hurry" that Thursday morning. There was to be a sociable at the house in the afternoon and more eggs were needed for the ice cream. It had to be boiled and cooled down, you know, before putting it in the freezer. So Hannah walked down the block and over past the Episcopal church, to the business section, carrying the charge-book and singing to herself.

Hannah was what used to be called "a likely-looking yellow girl," in the advertisements back in "slavery days," and the colored sport of the town had been "shining round her" for some time. It was therefore no wonder that she stopped on the Main street corner as Ben Knights, driver for the hardware store, came along and engaged in a little banter. And this was really the cause of her spending rather more time than was necessary. After a hurried visit to the grocer's she started back on a trot.

At the church corner Hannah hesitated. The wide front gates were open and the path, through the graveyard would save a full half block.

"I specs Mis' Emly dun giv me up," she mused. "En maybe I'se better tek de short cut."

Walking rather slowly now and looking about—it was high noon and the sun was shining from a cloudless sky with all the warmth and cheerfulness of a Carolina day in June—Hannah shivered as she passed the church and kept to the path between the graves and tombstones. Negroes are strongly opposed to graveyards, and even in the broad light she was not at ease. Glancing up to note the posi-

tion of the sun she felt a drop of rain! Then another drop! Momentarily paralyzed by this unexpected demonstration she stopped. The path had led alongside a simple, marble shaft on the face of which was carved:

Sacred to the Memory of
Hiram and Elsa Burgmann
Formerly of Germany
Murdered While They Slept,
Near Elmville, S. C.
March 16, 1880.

Hannah was not reading the inscription on the shaft, however. She had often heard about it—but now she put out her right hand and again felt the rain. . . . It was raining on the grave of the old German couple murdered in their country home some two months or more before—raining—out of a clear sky, with the sun shining!

“De Lawd dun bin weepin’ over de po’ ded wite fokes,” she whispered to herself, and clutching more tightly the bag of eggs, sped on the wings of terror through the yard and out the back gate, reaching the Bardeen’s kitchen, breathless.

“Mis’ Emly; Mis’ Emly!” she cried as Mrs. Bardeen began to ask about the delay. “Hits a rainin’ een de graveya’d, on de Burgmann’s grave—and de sun am shinin’ bright!”

Mrs. Bardeen, surprised at the announcement and forgetting to scold the tardy servant, asked again what she meant; and received only the same reply from the frightened girl. She declared that she had felt and seen the rain that was falling, right out of the blue sky, on the spot where the old Germans had been buried.

Mr. Bardeen came in for lunch and laughed when told of Hannah’s fright. But he went over to the graveyard later and standing near the shaft, heard something on his Derby hat. Taking it off quickly

it was to notice a tiny, wet spot. He faced the sun and several drops touched his face.

"Queer enough," he said to himself.

Passing out of the yard he met several people, and as everybody in a town knows everybody else, Mr. Bardeen had a word or two with each and mentioned the rain drops. A passing cloud he thought; too small to be noticed—no doubt it was easily explained.

But curiosity is credited with having caused fatalities to the number of nine necessary to check the career of a feline—and men are more curious. As Mr. Bardeen went towards Main Street it could have been noticed that a procession was making towards the church yard. In a half hour the whole town knew about the rain descending upon the Burgmann's grave—and the place became so filled with people that the rector applied to the town marshal for protection.

"It's dreadful," said the Rev. Dr. Willoghby. "The crowd is trampling all over the grave-yard, destroying the shrubbery and flowers. I can't do anything with them. They say the rain is coming down, slowly, but steadily. Some even brought umbrellas and counted a dozen drops . . . I've seen a few drops myself; but I'm sure there is nothing supernatural about it."

The gates were finally closed and with the marshal in charge things assumed the usual appearance about church and cemetery; the sexton however, working until night in an effort to repair damages done by careless feet during the unusual invasion.

*

*

*

*

That night—very late—the townspeople, who had discussed the mysterious rainfall until long past the regular bedtime—were awakened by the cry of “fire.”

Some of the early risers, noticing a glow to the east, thought it must be sunrise. But they found on coming out that it was just about daylight—and a big blaze was visible from almost any part of town.

“It’s the Baptist church!” declared some who were first awakened and had located the fire and spread the alarm.

Quickly the now lighted streets filled with people. The village fire company, with volunteers, pulling the ladder truck, arrived in front of the big, wooden structure as a mass of flames leaped from the roof at the rear. Men, women and children, variously clad and all excited, gathered about—but there was nothing to be done. Venturesome firemen battered down the front door of the church, proposing to save whatever could be moved, and were met by a dense cloud of smoke that quickly changed to fire. The interior was a seething furnace.

Built of yellow, resinous pine and very dry, the building burned rapidly. It was only a pile of glowing embers when the sun came up sending the onlookers home. There had been little wind and with no houses near it was only to watch and wonder why?

Though hands had been idle, tongues had not, and the news was spreading about as the steeple crashed to the ground and the big bell made its last appeal. It was to the effect that negroes had been seen near the church early in the evening.

A milkman was said to have given the first alarm of fire and rumor also credited him with having seen dark figures running away from that section when the light appeared. . . The colored people came to the fire—they always came to fires; but their appearance in numbers was after the white people

had arrived. . . The negro section was some distance away.

There was clearly no proper reason for the fire. . . . The church had not been opened for night service during the week; it was June and no fires had been lit in the wood stoves for months. It was too far from other buildings to have caught from sparks—that it was set was the only conclusion; and yet what could be gained by such a crime?

* * * *

There never was a braver man than Sheriff Harlee, and certainly none more just. But he had been sorely annoyed by the goings on in Elm county the past six months. . . . The burning of the Baptist church seemed to be the last straw to break his usual optimism and good humor—he was heard to make remarks that boded no good for those responsible for the fire and other crimes. . . His office was going to discover and punish the evil-doers—he said so frequently during the next few days, and meant it. The Burgmann double murder had baffled his skill and yet he believed it would be made plain. . . . Fire had been used there in an endeavor to cover up the crimes of murder and robbery; fire again was apparent in town—incendiary fire!

But why burn a church?

He went over to Augusta, Friday and talked to the chief of police of that city, across the Savannah, about the way things were going.

“Watch any idle negroes—or strangers—” the Georgian had advised. “You’ll get them.”

* * * *

In Baptist Bottom, the negro section of Elmvile, "Brother" John Phillips, preached a powerful sermon the following Sunday night. Brother John, a big, fat black man with a benign expression and a voice like a steam-whistle, exhorted his congregation to turn from sin and repent.

"Bredrens and sistrens," he said, after pursuing a well known text to its ultimate and pentultimate and out again—he couldn't read a word and had only pretended to get his subject from the book in front of him)—as he turned and twisted; "Bredrens and sistrens, dey is much tribulashuns 'mong de wite fokes an' sorrowin' an' snatchin' o' teeths. . . . Fust dey is bein' murdered een dey sleep an' den de Heavins weepin' ober 'em and confuscates de mo'ners. Now hits cum ter de'struction e' de chuches!"

Voices in the rear of the church: "Amen! Dat's so!"

"Mo' an' mo we's in trubble an' 'spichun dun pinted he slimsical finger e'n dis direcshun," continued Brother John. "De cullid people's dun gotter justify demselves fo' de lawd an' Sheriff Harlee!"

Again voices: "Ain't it de trufe!"

"I ent ax nobody who dun um. . . I ent say 'twas no cullid man 'tall; but disher spichun am mighty bad. We gotter clar up de cloud an' mek ourselves witer een snow!" The preacher paused and waved his hand around; sweeping the audience, which had become somewhat restless.

"Fore enny more iz sed," he went on. "I wants sinners ter come to de mo'ners' bench an' I'm gwinter pray fer 'em." . . . He stopped once more then demanded, dramatically:

"Lissen, you alls; caint yo' feel sumpin, movin'; inside yer?"

"Een meh Ha—rt!" shrilled a long, slim, black sister over to the north side in the gallery.

Two tones; A flat above the staff repeated, and F. held a long time;

"Een meh ha-ha't!" echoed two octaves lower by a baritone on the other side.

The assemblage taking it up, made the smoky, half-lit room shake with the refrain;

"Dere's a little wheel a-turnin', een meh ha—rt!"

*

*

*

*

Over and over again; the start way up, the heavy echo and the mass chorus; it swelled and filled the little church and seemed to act upon the men and women like a spell. . . There was almost an immediate movement towards the front.

Brother John, his black clothes blending with his head to make a silhouette against the whitewashed wall; greeted each sinner coming up and joined in the refrain with the crowd.

The front bench seemed filling with women when a long, ginger-cake colored man slouched up. He avoided the preacher's hand and sat down, covering his face.

The song, with only variations in the pitch, continued for half an hour and Brother John prayed, long and fervently for the sinners who had sought solace. Without apparently knowing it the preacher discussed all of Elmville's troubles, emphasizing recent happenings and events.

The oil lamps had burned dry when church was out—it had been a great meeting. The women wept and "zorted" until faint and helpless they fell to the floor. The men, except the one on the mourner's bench; participated in song, but did not otherwise show excitement. The man on the bench seemed to crumple closer and closer to the ground, but made no outcry or demonstration.

Sheriff Harlee had but reached his office in the temporary court house, across the railroad cut, Monday morning, when a tall, ill-favored, brown man slunk into the room. Although he wore better clothes than are generally noted on laborers his appearance suggested sleeping on a floor, or under a house. He looked around as though undecided and started out again when accosted by the sheriff, who knowing every negro in the county by name, and generally by reputation, said:

"Well, Sam, wot's troublin' yer? Pears like yer after somethin'?"

Looking furtively toward the door, in which the sheriff had placed himself, the negro fingered his hat and seemed nonplussed.

"It's all right," continued the sheriff, not unkindly. "Wotever ye know about it—tell me—and I'll do what I kin fer yer. . . . You know somethin' about this bad business. . . . An' I've hed me eye on yer for some time . . . You an' others; wot's had too much money fer loafing mens. Spill it out!"

"I jest can't help it, sheriff" he said almost in a whisper. "I gotter tell. . . . Hits about de fire—an' Adam Johnson's gang— . . ."

Twenty minutes later deputies from the sheriff's office were scouring the neighborhood for four negroes named by Sam Blocker—confessed murderer, thief and incendiary. He had told the whole story, hoping to save his own skin.

Elmville rang with the news of the arrests that day. The men; Adam Johnson, a trifling painter who had lived rather well without using his brushes the past six months, and four others equally no-account and easily led, were in jail before night; and evidence had been found in their homes that was damaging. Johnson had taken the Bible from the church before it was set fire and others had articles taken from the Burgmann home, using them with apparent indifference to their possibilities.

Sam Blocker had told how they killed the Burgmann's, burned the church and planned a general raid on many homes. The church fire was admitted to have been a failure because it started too late. Some of the "gang" had opposed the burning of a church but Johnson declared it would bring all the white people away from their homes and make it easy to rob them. . . . As people were already astir and sunrise near they dared not follow up the plan—but they meant to go on.

Then somehow Sam heard about the tears from Heaven falling in the graveyard—and a few nights afterwards he went to church—said he didn't know why—.

*

*

*

*

Back of the big residence that was used for a court house while the new county of Elm was getting ready to build, stood the temporary jail. A board fence five or six feet high enclosed the yard, which was perhaps an acre in extent. All around the place streets and unoccupied land. . . . The railroad cut, through which the South Carolina Railroad passed formed the northern boundary of the premises. . . . To the south the ground was somewhat rolling, with Slippery Hill a little further on . . . For a month past everybody had known that Adam Johnson and his gang were in jail . . . Many had attended the trial and heard the verdict and sentence of the court.

And one day in the early fall and early in the morning the casual passer that way would have wondered what was in the air. For the first "crack of dawn" found people scattered variously over the

high places in that vicinity. They were practically camping and breakfast was eaten by hundreds of people from the country near their one-mule wagons. The whole family had come; and at sunrise the numbers increased and every road and street showed moving crowds. . . Some of the teams appeared to have been on the road a long time. . . And later people began arriving in the vicinity on foot, coming over from the north side crossing the high bridge and finding places adjacent to the jail yard.

Even in the heart of town, Main Street and near by sections, took on an unusual air of activity that morning. It was not "market day" or court week; neither was there a circus advertised. The crowd coming in and moving about, to finally locate near the county buildings, was not a holiday gathering. It was quiet without repression; talking but not laughing. . . There appeared to be no inclination to trade or swap stories.

Over the fence from almost any point nearby could be seen a queer looking structure. Two heavy uprights of new timber with a cross beam, well-braced—and from the beam dangled four new ropes. Those people on elevated positions at some distance away could see that below the ropes there was a platform, of rough, unpainted boards—with steps at one end—and near it a "figure-four trigger," such as the boys use for squirrel and rabbit traps.

Up came the sun. . . On came the people—now showing town folks among the steadily arriving visitors. The colored people kept well to themselves, and away from the whites. There were hundreds of thm.

Ten o'clock found some movement in the jail yard. At eleven there were thousands about the jail yard and hundreds had obtained entrance to the yard and were grouped near the court house or around the scaffold.

At eleven thirty a great cry went up from the section occupied by the colored people.

"Dey's comin' out! O, Lawdy! Have mussy on 'em!" came in a wave of weeping and moaning from the women; while the men looked on intent and silent.

Sheriff Harlee appeared at the jail door and behind him came four white-robed figures, each attended by a colored minister, the latter singing nervously a refrain from a well known hymn. . . . Faint as it was the crowd over towards Slippery Hill caught it up, and the procession to the gallows was marked with a weird chanting that swept over the place and was lost in the great Elms that shaded a part of the crowd inside the yard and reached almost to the ugly structure in the centre.

Mounting the steps, after the Sheriff, the four men stood each under a swinging noose, and Brother John once more exhorted all hearers to repent and avoid the awful fate now impending the men of his race who had so grievously sinned. Sheriff Harlee spoke to the men; offered to let them talk—but they said little—then the black hoods; the tying and—as the officials left the platform, the click of the trigger. . . . Four figures fell as the platform opened in a few minutes it was all over. While the crowd of mourners on the Slippery Hill side wailed and cried and prayed aloud . . . the great crowd of white spectators made no sign . . . Retribution was accomplished. They almost immediately made preparations for returning to their homes.

And never in the years since has there been another "gang" formed or reign of terror such as had been started by Adam Johnson.

*

*

*

*

Why four on the long gallows tree, you ask, instead of five? well; the files of the local newspaper show that Sam Blocker, having "turned state's evidence" was granted a short reprieve, although convicted and sentenced with the others. . . But there was found no excuse for him, after all, as his confession had been through cowardice and the hope of clemency. He was later executed on the same scaffold.

And the rain that descended on the just and the unjust who visited the graveyard and stood near the memorial to the murdered Burgmann's? An eminent botanist residing in Elmville and investigating the phenomena some days after Hannah's fright, found it caused by a weeping tree of the *Mimosa* family. It was near, but not over the grave.

Probably today the visitor may experience a slight shower there—if it happens to be June and the wind is from the northwest. . . Unless, of course, the tree has been cut down.

AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW

It had been a discouraging day, from six o'clock when Joseph Gilbert opened his grocery store at the corner of Park and Albert Streets. It was Monday and with everybody in a hurry and many in a bad humor, the clerk away on account of his grandmother's funeral and the delivery boy slower than usual, things seemed to be about as bad as they could be, when the postman came in, and shaking his raincoat rather viciously in the middle of the floor, handed Gilbert a half-dozen circulars, begging letters, and one from the local law firm. He knew the lawyers and their business very well—the card on the envelope was enough to add a jolt to the already rough treatment of weather and conditions. Overcast for a while and then a mean little drizzle just as though it meant to keep it up all day. Way down in Florida it sometimes begins that way in March, and later changes to conditions that make you forget all about the unpleasantness.

Things were not moving pleasantly for Gilbert, and after assuring a customer that it was necessary to raise the price of butter, since her last visit, exchanging a bottle of catsup that bore evidence of having been opened and sampled, for a new one, he chased out a stray dog, rearranged some canned goods and—opened the letter from Day & Page. It was worse even than he had expected. The firm represented Hiram Woodhull, who had loaned him money some years ago, and he was behind with the interest—more than he had told his wife. Now it was certain to be bad news, and plenty of it.

The firm curtly reminded him of his default in interest and said that their client had decided to foreclose the mortgage on the house—the home—the amount now due was \$865.44 and unless it were

paid in full within ten days proceedings for foreclosure would be started. The utter impossibility of raising the money needed at this time added gloom to Gilbert's already almost hopeless countenance and he served customers, straggling in through the rain, with few words and none too cheerful manner. The morning wore along and at 1 o'clock, with the knowledge that some customers would come and finding the door shut, go to the new store around the corner, he was yet compelled to lock up and make his way home. The weather had changed somewhat—it was raining hard, and tramping through the street and into the nearby suburbs Gilbert thought it over and wondered how Elizabeth would take the news.

The Gilbert home was a pretty bungalow, built along Spanish lines, and with its well kept yard showing violets and roses and other spring flowers, the picture was attractive, even through the curtain of water. Along the front a Bougenvelia vine was working its way up a trellis and near-by a flaming yellow creeper made brilliant contrast with the gray stucco of the walls. There are thousands of these picturesque little homes in Florida—Valdez was just one of the places that "sprung up" a mile or two from a good-sized Florida city, and there was much to commend it to the lover of beauty, but not too much business for the merchants who had located there.

Stamping and shaking the rain from his coat and umbrella Joseph Gilbert opened the screen door and entered, to be met by his wife just inside, and he could hear the chatter of the children as he left the noise of the rain outside. Regardless of his damp coat Elizabeth Gilbert gave him a big hug and affectionate kiss as he tried to appear chiefly interested in getting rid of his incumbrances—a package or two and the morning newspaper from Jacksonville. But Elizabeth knew instinctively that there was something worrying Joseph; more than

usual. Women always know when a man is happy—or unhappy—and many of them understand that they need only to wait a bit and the trouble will be shared with the life-partner—the woman often taking the heavier part of the burden.

“Bad news, dear,” he said as he passed into the dining room, where the children, Betty, aged nearly five, and Billy, just about three, were already waiting for lunch. They greeted their father cheerily and he gave each a merry answer and some attention when passing their chairs. The meal was ready, and without answering the announcement made by her husband Elizabeth indicated that they would begin at once; the fact that he had but little time was understood, and the children were impatient. For a few minutes all attention was given to the food, and then as lunch was nearly over Elizabeth asked about the news.

“Guess we will have to give up the place,” he said, looking around and talking as though it was an old friend that must be given farewell. Through the casement window the nasturtiums in full bloom nodded from their box to those in the dining room, and seemed to be wondering why everyone should not be as gay and cheerful as they. The rain had ceased while the Gilbert’s were at luncheon, and the sun was breaking through the clouds and changing everything outside to brightness.

“A letter from Day & Page tells me that Woodhull must have his money; not just the interest, but the whole balance—more than eight hundred dollars—or he will foreclose. And of course I haven’t nearly that much, and see no way to get it.”

Elizabeth, her face paler, but without any signs of giving up, rose with him, and the two walked together to the front door. The children had been excused a few minutes before and they clattered out through the door to the little porch, delighted to find the rain over and the place bright with sunlight.

There were yet dark clouds in the east and as the

man and woman came outside a great, beautiful half circle of colored light appeared in the eastern sky. It was a rainbow—and nowhere in the world is this phenomena more perfect or more wonderful than in Florida. The sun had past the meridian some time and the arc of colors and fire, while comparatively low, fairly glowed at apex and the point where they disappeared behind a slight rise of ground to the eastward.

"We will talk it over tonight," Elizabeth finally said; as Joseph kissed her and the children, and started slowly down the steps. "Don't worry, dear. I'll still have you—and the kiddies—" smiling at the bright little faces that had been showing curiosity although not fully appreciating the cause of unusual quietness on the part of their elders. "No one can take them from me; so why should anything else upset us."

The brave little woman turned back into the house as Joseph walked briskly down the street; apparently in better spirits than when he had come home—and glad to have at least gotten the relief that comes with sharing a trouble.

Betty and Billy were on the porch, gazing interestedly at the rainbow, which had even brought itself an echo—a reflection little less vivid, outside the big arch; a lovely picture on the clouds and one that brought something very important to the busy mind of Betty.

"Lissen; Billy;" she says. "Last summer nurse told me 'bout rainbows an' ev'ything. Right down there by that house on the hill's a nice pot full of gold-money! Yes; just full! An' daddy he wants a lot of money; right off, quick. So less you and me go right up there an' get it and bring it to him!"

"Awight," says Billy. Not fully understanding, but ready to do as Betty said. And without waiting to tell mother they started. Billy had brought his straw hat out on the porch and with that adjusted everything was ready for a trip. Inside they could

hear mother clearing the table and washing the dishes. The get-away was quiet as children often manage when determined to undertake something they fear would be denied if permission were asked.

*

*

*

*

Hand in hand the youngsters trotted down the street. Father's store was on the direct route they had undertaken, but Betty was wise in her five years of life and knew better than to pass that way. They turned and went the block above and later came again to the street that led out of town. Before them the bright bow in the sky gleamed out and their short legs worked fast as they passed the town proper and came into the suburbs, where farms began to stretch out and the houses were far apart. Crossing a little creek the two children stopped to look over the rail for fishes, and a puff of wind took Billy's hat just as though it was needed for a float in the merry little stream.

Billy was disposed to cry over this calamity but Betty had something to do and told him never mind—and that they would get it when they came back. On they trudged, but a little weary, and Betty seemed to feel that the rainbow and the gold-money were moving away from her. But she helped Billy up when he stumbled, and wiping off the dirt from his face, or some of it, with her apron, the journey was resumed. They were now quite near a big farm house, and apparently on the farm road, for both sides were showing crops and other evidences of attention. An orange grove was ahead of them, and barns beyond the house and grounds.

"It's right behind vat house" declared Betty, as they drew opposite, in the road, "an' right off we'll

get it." But Billy's fat legs had gotten wobbly again and upset him. This time it was more trouble to reassure and smooth down his feelings. In fact Betty had to mother him a good deal and sitting on the grass at the side of the road, close to the trunk of a huge, moss-hung oak, warmth and weariness overtook both, almost at the same time, and in a minute they were asleep, as sound as though in their own little beds and almost as safe.

* * * *

In the well appointed living room of the big house on the hill, just east of Valdez a gray-haired man is discussing business matters with men who come and go, apparently foremen and managers about the place. Giles Hansen, a successful planter and orange grower, has a fine acreage and during the twenty-five or thirty years of his life since coming to Florida everything he has touched has proved valuable. The plantation, the grove, his live-stock and dairy farm are all known in the vicinity, and while in the past half dozen years he has only spent a week or two, at intervals, in Valdez, he keeps in touch with this property and is making money without great effort. Although away a greater part of the time the big house is kept as it was and the housekeeper comes in now to talk a few minutes of things needed or possibilities of visitors.

"I shall go back north today," he said to Mrs. Brown. "Have James bring my bag down and get out the car. We will drive over to Fort Pierce and I will send him back."

Hansen taking out his pipe and filling it, lights up and settles down into his big chair to smoke, and

to think . . . How he wishes that he could get along without thinking . . . But what's the use? It cannot be done.

Taking from his pocket a leather case it is to open it and look long upon the photograph therein. In the smoke-cloud he can see, as he has a thousand times seen in the past six years, the door on the porch open and standing in the broad sunlight his girl—the girl who grew up under his watchful care, from a wee bairn to a lovely young woman. Her mother's life given in bringing a daughter into the world, Giles Hansen had made a sort of fetish of this baby. . . . Of course she was the most wonderful, the most beautiful and the cleverest little girl in all the country. . . and while he worked and planned and petted and loved her, with the double affection that had come where it might have been divided between mother and child, the grace and sweetness of her soul shone out in her laughing eyes and her amiable disposition.

* * * *

But Elizabeth was standing at the door—in the doorway—in this day-dream that had haunted him for years—and she was not alone. Grown to lovely young womanhood and more adorable in her new-found and added happiness, his Elizabeth was holding the hand of a young man of the neighborhood. They entered, and the girl in a few words told him that they had just been married. . . .

Hansen had nothing against John Gilbert, except that he was young and good-looking and had little to offer a wife except a clean record, a fairly good job and promises of love and affection. . . . But he

didn't want to let his girl go. . . . Not so soon. . . . He was angered because she had not told him, and it seemed so ungrateful, and thoughtless, and hard. . . . And—well; he would like to forget how furious he had become. There was excuse enough, perhaps, but today he was wondering if he had not been too severe. . . Then pride and stubbornness returned, and he knew that there was nothing he desired so much as to forget and keep away from this place that had given him happiness and then taken it from him.

* * * *

Mrs. Brown, the housekeeper called in that James was ready and he could hear the car softly "chugging" out on the road. The pipe out and returned to his pocket, a hat picked up as he went through the hallway, and Giles Hansen was again the man of affairs and sometime club expert and habitue, ready to journey far away and join with others of his kind in northern and eastern cities, to talk of business and other things.

He left the house and coming down to where the car was standing, noticed the children, not a half dozen yards away, now rousing from their nap. With one foot on the running board of the car he paused to quizzically survey the youngsters.

Village children on an errand no doubt, and my how dirty the little chap had gotten! As he paused it was to hear Betty, in great dismay exclaiming on the disappearance of the rainbow:

"It's gone;" she wailed, forgetting that she should be brave in order to keep up the courage of small brother. "It's gone—an' now we can't get the gold-money, nor nothin'!"

Billy was not more than half awake, but he wept faithfully in tune with sister's small sobbing. Something had been taken from this pair of pilgrims, and Hansen hesitated and then went over to investigate.

* * * *

In the little town of Valdez more than one family was disturbed and the search for Betty and Billy begun within half an hour after Mrs. Gilbert discovered that the children were not anywhere about the bungalow and not at the store, where they sometimes went. A neighbor who came in with Billy's hat, picked out of the creek half a mile below the bridge, told Elizabeth not to worry—but she thought the creek ought to be dragged. . . Others were almost as cheerful. . . . Joseph had hurried home, and then started out with several of the men to search, and had gone in the wrong direction; all of them. . . Some one kindly mentioned the fact that a band of gypsies, travelling that way the previous week had probably stopped just outside of town. . . All of which was driving Elizabeth to hysteria.

* * * *

Under the big oaks, opposite Giles Hansen's big house, the owner of the place was talking to the two little tired, rumpled and more or less dusty children. Betty was very quick to respond to the big, nice-looking man. . . She always had liked men, best—perhaps.

"We wuz goin' to get a pot of gold-money; for daddy," she said pointing over towards the house. "It was right behind that big house, at the bottom where the bow came down—all lit up; nurse told me. An' daddy wanted the gold-money, 'cause bad mans would take our house and we would have to live at the postoffice 'ness he paid 'em, rite off."

"An we lost it," added Billy, remembering that it was something to do with a find that hadn't materialized.

*

*

*

*

As the children chattered on, Giles Hansen's eyes were getting troublesome and a lump climbed up into his throat that he couldn't cough down. In the six years that had elapsed since he drove his daughter from his door he had neither seen nor heard from her, and having warned his help not to speak, he only knew casually that she lived in the neighborhood—but those were her eyes, and that was her voice—her baby voice, he remembered so well, through all the years between!

"Come into the house with me," he said to Betty. "We will see, perhaps the pot of gold-money is in there—anyway I know Mrs. Brown has some cookies and milk—and you wouldn't mind a drink, would you, after your long walk?"

Billy's eyes opened big at the suggestion, and James was surprised when the party of three turned towards the house.

"Put my bag in the house, James," he said. "Then wait in the car for me. It may be a little while."

True enough, Mrs. Brown, surprised, but delighted, welcomed the children and produced the re-

freshment needed while Hansen looked about the storeroom found a little earthenware pot, with "beans" stamped into the clay. Returning he presented it to Betty, half filled with coins of silver and gold, and was given a kiss that seemed to thrill him as nothing else had in a long time.

* * * *

Down at the little gray Spanish bungalow, with flame vine at one side and the Bougenvelia at the other the women are trying to make Elizabeth talk—and she doesn't want to talk. She is nearing collapse, and when the telephone rings she reaches for the receiver but has scarcely enough strength to answer.

"Yes; this is Mrs. Gilbert," she finally says.

And then the neighbors feel that something has happened. News of the babies, of course . . . but what kind of news?

It is a baby's voice on the wire now:

"Mamma," says Betty—"Is that you mamma? Well Billy an' me is at Granpa's—an' we found the gold-money—but the rainbow went out; grandpa got it—an' he's gonner bring us home—rite now Good-by."

Still clinging to the wire Elizabeth hears another voice. It is one she had not heard in six long years—and her face goes white and red and white again:

"Your babies have found the rainbow, dear," he says. "More than that . . . They have found my heart; I thought it was dead, but it is aching to be near you and ask you to forgive your foolish old father, who wanted all or nothing. Shall I come and bring the babies home?"

"Yes; yes," she says, "come quickly."

THE ISLE OF SOMEWHERE

John Hall, possessor of good health and a desire to see more of the world, to which was added some years of newspaper work in various places and the ability to sell his letters and stories when offered, was making a cursory inspection of the capable British Bark E. M. Hollins, at anchor off the docks at Panama, when he nearly walked over a good-looking, young woman. The Hollins, was due to sail within a few hours for Pango Pango, with a general cargo for that Southern Pacific port, and chartered to load there a cargo of copra for Havre. A long voyage, or two voyages, suited all exactly and his arrangements with Captain Hollins had been made soon after arriving from Boston. The Hollins had been at Panama for a week or more and was ready to start when the papers were brought aboard. Knowing the mate Hall had come ahead of the captain, and brought his bag.

Walking aft from the ladder amidships had brought the passenger to the quarters of the officers and noting preparations for sailing as he went, Hall nodded to the mate and opened a door leading to the Captain's cabin.

"Good morning," he said, as the young woman looked up from her sewing and seemed surprised. It was 2 P. M. but he had the newspaper man's habit of using but one term of salute regardless of the hour. In a print shop the time overlaps and not wishing to change because the clock has passed midnight or midday, they say "good morning" anytime.

"Good morning, Sir:" she replied, smiling in spite of herself at the greeting and adding a question. "Did you want to see the captain?"

"I thank you, Miss," said Hall; "Miss Hollins isn't it? But I've just left the captain ashore and am

bound for a cruise on the Hollins—by his consent. I had not anticipated the pleasure—however. You are evidently going?”

“Yes;” was the response. “I am Ethel Hollins and I have been with father for the past few years; since mother died.”

“Pardon me;” said Hall. “I am John Hall; tramp and scribbler and heading for the South Seas. Your father didn’t say anything about you—but I’m glad, and hope we shall be friends—. Capt. Hollins said I could have the room on the port side, next to his; and I’ll just put my bag and coat in there, if you don’t mind.”

A minute later Ethel Hollins was wondering if this new travelling companion would prove agreeable. She had experienced some discomfort on account of supercargoes; but this started differently. The new man looked cheerful—not handsome—just average in style and manner and physical proportions.

In the room next to the captain’s, on the port side, John Hall decided that Ethel Hollins was a rather neat person, perhaps about 25 years of age, with good features, amiable disposition, English type; and no doubt after all an added feature to the long trip ahead. . . After at least half a dozen romances that had seemed to work backwards, after a fair start, Hall considered himself a confirmed old bach—at forty. Admitting that the fault was his own he held no grudge against womankind; but he made no effort to cultivate the sex.” . . .

But things were going on outside. The captain coming on board, with a new steward, and some last minute purchases took charge of the boat as it was made ready for the start. The Hollins swung around to face the wind as the anchor came up and with yards squared away and booms clattering to jibe, the start was made. . . It was a long leg to westward and Hall, now properly introduced to Ethel was standing with her well forward

at the rail, marked the harbor lines and the many small islands of Panama bay, and then the gulf.

The two without nautical duties talked of many things besides the sea, however, and later, at dinner in the cabin the conversation was again general and pleasant.

"I thought you would be glad to have another travelling companion besides myself," said the captain, laughing. "I didn't mention Ethel—but I knew she was a good sailor and would make good weather in any situation."

"Father forgets that I am here when the boat needs attention," the girl interposed. "But I'm not fussy—or jealous."

"I guess he never forgets," said Hall. "But keeping things going right is rather important on ship-board."

* * * *

The Hollins made good time out beyond the peninsula and later making to the southeast, stood off well and seemed to settle down to her task. A bark, square rigged forward and with great sails, their booms sweeping the decks aft, is speedy in good weather, but always requires a large crew. Even with the donkey engine to raise the heavier sails there must be men for the yards and steady relief for the watch and the wheel. Before the sun had set in tropical splendor everything appeared to have assumed routine on board and the Hollins was apparently alone on the sea.

Two days at sea and those on the Hollins were rather well acquainted. The newcomers, Hall and the steward, were getting acclimated. Merchant captains live well—that is known; and everything

was going forward nicely. Hall had proved a good loser at bridge—Salters the mate making the fourth hand—and he was a good listener when the captain chose to tell of his experience at sea. Incidentally he had discovered that the red in Ethel's hair was most becoming and her complexion remarkable when taking into consideration the outdoor life she led. . . It's a long way to the Samoan Islands, from almost anywhere, and the long, lazy days, and long, wonderful nights followed each other, the Hollins making long legs in her zigzag course so essential to a sailing vessel. It was hot weather—with cool nights—blazing perhaps would be the descriptive to use for midday. . . . Nothing more than a squall or two had marked the passage of the world's middle belt, the bark behaving well and answering all demands, as the days passed into weeks, and it was when calculations at noon were indicating the near approach to destination that a real storm was encountered.

Storms come up quickly in the lower Pacific; black squalls that spend their fury in an hour or less and fairly defy the efforts of man to brave them, and test the best of ships. With but the rapid fall of the barometer as a signal, while the sea and sky appear as molten brass, melting into each other at the horizon line, the mercury starts downward at a rate unusual and it is then that mariners make haste to get everything taut and stand by for trouble. . . . Quick orders are roared from the main deck at the indications noted.

It was the Fourth of July and Hall having breakfasted early and pinned a small United States flag on Ethel's dress, was talking below decks when Salters looked in and spoke of the weather. They had been discussing the declaration of independence when the interruption came, but the message was rather more startling than had been heard before.

"Going to be nasty, Sir," said the mate, addressing the captain. "Glass has dropped to 29.8 and is

dropping," he added, then quickly disappearing as a gust of wind gave the cabin door a sharp slam and seemed to hit the bark square abeam. The blow was followed by another, interfering with the steady rise and fall that had become to be understood and unnoticed as the boat went forward during the past weeks.

Captain Hollins followed Salters to the deck and Hall and Ethel looked out, before deciding what to do next.

"I guess there'll be lots of rain with the wind," said Hall to Ethel. "Maybe you'd better stay below. I want to see if I can get a snapshot or two."

Stepping into his room Hall grabbed a short rain-coat he had worn on various occasions where a longer one would be in the way and slipping the strap of his camera over one shoulder, fastened it close with the belt. An oilskin cap completed his storm equipment and waving to Ethel, who was putting some things where they could not roll about, he went on deck.

Suddenly it had become almost dark as night and with the wind howling through the rigging and scudding under bare poles the bark was heaving and pitching outrageously. A blinding downpour of rain came just as Hall cleared the cabin—then it stopped—and having paused in the shelter of the companionway he started forward, was caught by a great wave that crashed over the opposite side of the boat and thrown down. A lurch at that instant seemed to take the deck from under him and clutching at something that rolled his way he went overboard into the boiling sea.

A good swimmer, Hall instinctively realized that there was little chance for help. No one had seen him go over—and probably no one could have assisted him if his predicament were known. . . But what was it that he held onto so tightly? It had come overboard with him and seemed to be acting as a buoy, although pulling hard to get away. . . It

was, he quickly realized, just a large, wicker-covered bottle, called a demi-john in the states, tightly corked, and evidently nearly empty. It probably held some liquid and was abandoned by a steward or sailor when the storm caught the bark. . . It was worth hanging onto, Hall quickly decided, and he managed somehow to get his arm through the stout wicker handle.

In a moment Hall seemed to have been swept miles from the Hollins and knowing that it was worse than useless to call out or try to swim against the squall he conserved his strength by floating, whipped onward by the wind.

At the top of a great wave a few minutes after going overboard, Hall saw the Hollins apparently rolling in the trough of the sea. His nautical experience told him that as though it had been shouted from the bark "the rudder is gone!"—"God help them," he said to himself, and while battling with the foaming peaks and struggling through the awful valleys of dark waters he wondered if Ethel was afraid—and wished he could have been with her; to help perhaps with the boats, and all that.

An hour; perhaps two hours, passed. The squall going southward, left mountains of water; waves snow-capped; the sun broke through the leaden pall that had hung close to the waters, and Hall, searching the sea for the Hollins—or a boat—saw nothing but water.

Swimming now, steadily, with the wind, Hall recalled the thousand tales of rescue and remembered that nearly all had been fiction. But he had no inclination to give up. His demi-john buoy was doing nobly. He wondered what was in it—guessed vinegar—and kept on floating and swimming when it seemed to be of any use. Only exhaustion would make him release the hold on the bottle, and remembering the results of observations made the previous day he hoped against almost certain conviction. The Samoan Islands were not very far away.

Of that he was sure, but there was little else to depend upon—and not a sail on the ocean or a sign of smoke.

It seemed to be hours more, but probably not so long, that Hall held on and apparently moved with wind and waves. Then on the crest of a great water-mountain he saw, or fancied he saw, land! Again he swam and with the strength of renewed courage and desire. The shore—it was discernable now in the strong sunset light—seemed to be receding, but he kept on—on and on—until, picked up by a huge breaker, he was carried where his feet touched the bottom. Half dead with fatigue he dragged himself through the swirl to hard beach; then up on the sands, out of reach should the tide come further, and down to rest and sleep.

When Hall woke, sore and weary, it was to find the morning sun glaring upon him from across countless miles of water. He instantly realized his position and finding that he could use his legs, even though they were stiff and numb, it was to stand erect and scan the horizon, seeking the Hollins—and Ethel; or was it Ethel and the Hollins? There was nothing to be seen but the vast expanse of waters, white-capped, but otherwise so different from the scene during the storm. To look about him was next, and there was the demi-john, he had brought his supporter safely above high water mark. No dot or mark on the sea, while the surf thundered at his feet. Shoreward inspection revealed at once that this was a small island with some foliage. Perhaps it was inhabited? Anyway it was substantial footing.

Having had no food or water since noon of the previous day made Hall begin a survey of his island almost immediately. Results were satisfactory in many respects—but doubtful in others. In a well-wooded section, inland, a spring of sweet water was found. Coconut trees offered food. But over on the opposite side from which Hall had landed un-

mistakable signs were found to suggest occupation. Charred bones and skulls, under a big tree over to the west, indicated the sometime presence of men. The pits and spits and smoked stones gave Hall an idea.

"Cannibals" he said to himself. "This must be one of the Fiji group; and inhabited by savages." He proceeded, cautiously, now, to inspect the entire island—found it about a mile long and a half a mile wide, with slightly elevated interior and considerable growth of trees almost in the centre. Failure to meet up with any living thing Hall decided that it was probably the resort of tribes from nearby islands. To get away from the island was, of course, the first impulse, after being fed and watered, to escape the disturbing evidences of cannibal feasts. How to get away, was not a question easily answered—at least he could fly a flag, he thought, the white silk shirt offered a good signal—and there were long branches that could be utilized for flag-poles.

A strong knife, only slightly rusted from the hours under water in his trousers pocket, cut a long limb, and Hall deciding to profit by the height of a tree, directly over the "devil's kitchen" climbed carefully to a point where the flag could be displayed to advantage. . . It was before further operations had begun, however, that he scanned the sea and made a discovery. Certainly to the southwest, and perhaps only a few miles away, was another island—or land of some kind—perhaps a group of islands. Nearer in, and evidently making for the shore Hall saw three objects moving—three canoes, each with a number of savages, heading for the island. . . . Fascinated, he watched the swift-paddling of the black men and within a very short space of time the canoes grounded on the beach, and pouring out like a swarm of ants, the men came ashore, dragged the boats up, and started—towards the spot where Hall had made his discovery in the morning. As if paralyzed Hall kept his eyes on the invaders, and

unable to do anything but hold on, he noted that the party carried two burdens.

At the base of the tree Hall's coat and camera would have been a "dead give away" to his whereabouts, and a gleam of intelligence caused him to use the flag pole—reaching downward, he caught the coat and the camera strap and brought them to himself, in the thick branches and made them fast.

The blacks were chattering. . . he could see them now very clearly . . . and it was evident they were bringing victims for a feast! Directly under the tree the crowd gathered—they had dropped their burdens a little way off, under another tree, and the chief cook and assistants began at once to clear the pit and start a fire. . . Hall almost fainted with horror at this; he had discovered the identity of the victims . . . Ethel and Salters!

The chattering grew louder as the fire-makers got a blaze and gathered dry sticks. . . Not a sound from the man or woman on the ground . . . they had evidently passed the stage of protest, if alive.

Something must be done! Instantly . . . but what? Hall's brain was seething with indecision. It would have only been suicide to go down and give battle to two score of savages, and added to the joy of their banquet. . . "Do something; quickly." Hall could almost hear Ethel calling to him—and then—

Remembering a large package of developed films in the inside pocket of the coat, it was a noiseless proposition to get them out; Hall's shirt was nearly off, and a quick twist gave him a good-sized envelope into which he thrust the films, twisted and wrinkled to make them spread out and separate. Tying this bag on the small end of the pole, from the trousers pocket came a tiny match box, of the kind that seals through pressure—the matches inside were as good as ever, and a quiet ignition was followed by a touch to one of the films.

The blacks were making such a fuss that slight sounds in the tree would not be noticed by them. . .

.

Hall changed position carefully to be able to lower the now smoking bag, and an instant later the celluloid bits all took fire, and in a mass, swirling and hissing through the thin silk, they descended upon the heads of the savages like hell-snakes . . . searing and burning and igniting the greasy wool . . . stinging and snapping as they touched the bodies of the men. At first appearance of fire Hall had set up an unearthly yell—and almost frightening himself off his perch, he kept up the noise as the fire rain continued.

Savages looking upwards at the intimation of trouble caught the pieces of film in their faces, and unable to understand the origin, at once decided that it was supernatural and therefore more terrible. . . Confusion ensued. The blacks in their terror fought each other and in a minute a stampede started for the beach. Those who had been burned were leading at the boats and the first boat was swamped as soon as launched. The blacks swam to the second boat, and that also went down—but the third boat, with probably a dozen men cleared the others, who were struggling and fighting, even in the water, and seemed to be heading straight away.

As soon as convinced that the blacks' only idea was to escape Hall came down from the tree and a little way from where the roasting pit had been made Salters and Ethel lay, wide-eyed and wondering, but silent. They evidently understood a change in the situation, but were unable to move. As Hall approached Ethel fainted away, and came to a few minutes later when the men untied and made her comfortable. Salters was not very steady, but once released from the thongs, made haste to straighten out and use his limbs. As Ethel slowly revived the mate explained their presence.

"The rudder went by," Salters said, "and we knew it was all up . . . The crew acted badly . . . A rotten bunch mostly picked up at Panama and Colon. They took the boats—and every one was swamped. The

captain was knocked down by a swinging boom and overboard; right before our eyes. . . Miss Hollins and me were near the forward hatch when it was thrown loose on a lurch, and some way we both landed on it as it went over. . . That's all. . . Except that our island was inhabited by cannibals." Ethel listened, and shuddering, closed her eyes again. She was soon sitting up, however, and Hall told his story, brief enough, and explained the mystery of the hell's brood, turned loose on the savages.

As the odd trio turned away from the tree and moved inshore Hall noted that Salters walked slowly and was evidently in pain. They went but a short way, to a group of trees further inland, and Hall said:

"This is our camp site. Now that we are here I am going to propose—We shall be on this island for some time. I think it best that Ethel and I should marry," he said. If we had reached Pango Pango I meant to ask her. Now it would be best—."

"Very good, sir," said Salters.

"But do you really want to marry me?" asked Ethel; wondering if she was still in the trance which had come over her soon after being captured by the savages. "And even so—how could we be married? I owe my life to you—and have no other attachment; but what can we do?"

"Details are easy enough," said Hall. "In the first place I will take charge of this island in the name of the United States of America. It is the Isle of Somewhere, and I appoint Sam Salters a notary public. By right of discovery I am the governor. Salters will marry us, at once."

On the nearest tree the letters U. S. A. were rudely cut and the tiny flag that had been left on Ethel's dress, through the storm, was fastened, just above the carving. Salters laughingly admitted his authority and called for action.

"All right, my hearties," he said. "Get together. Take hands . . . Do you, John Hall, take Ethel Hollins

to be your wife? Fair weather or storm? And do you Ethel Hollins; same way?"

"I do," said Hall.

"Yes," said Ethel.

"Then, I Sam Salters, notorious publican of the United States Isle of Somewhere, pronounce you man and wife—and God bless you." So saying Salters touched each on the shoulder and turned away.

Hall noting the look on the face of the mate stepped up to him, quickly, and caught him as he drooped and fell. He had resisted the blacks when found on their island and their spears were sharp. He tried to smile—but the end came quickly . . . Hall and Ethel laid him to rest near a great tree on the east side of the island and turning toward the sunset began a honeymoon as strange as any ever conjured up by the storry-tellers.

And the days and nights came and went. . . . For a long time Hall and Ethel feared a return of the blacks—but they never returned. The island was found to afford much in the way of bodily comfort. It was intensely warm during the day, but cool at night, and the shak built the second or third day after the strange wedding served a shelter and made headquarters for whatever they wished to do or keep. Plenty of water and fruit, and to this had been added fish, for Hall's socks, ravelled carefully, and a safety pin, had furnished a fishing outfit that was ample for the situation. The crystal of Hall's watch gave them fire whenever needed. . . . The bride and groom walked and talked and swam and played checkers with shells on the beach, fished and wondered when they should see a sail.

The flag was put up as soon as possible, on the tree at the west side of the island. Ethel supplied the material for the banner this time. They soon devised clothing from grass and leaves amply sufficient for the occasion. . . . They talked of the past—the lives of each became an open book—and then spe-

culated on the future. . . With bodily comforts supplied and the society of each other there was yet a longing for the world. They were not completely happy.

"Let's write to Uncle Sam" said Ethel one day, after a long talk over a contingency that seemed to pressage danger and was yet a joy.

"Very good idea," said Hall. "But how?" The postman hasn't been near us since we landed."

"Since you landed, please," she corrected. "I only came over for a roast."

"Laughing heartily at this ghastly joke the couple walked the beach, ever looking seawards and wondering, when and how . . . It was soon afterwards that they came to the place where Hall came ashore, and on the sand, with head up, there was still the demi-john, little worse for its experience. Ethel pushed it over with her bare foot.

"There's something in it!" exclaimed Hall, remembering that it had sloshed when he brought it ashore. But he had been too weary to investigate then and had forgotten it since.

"It was used for vinegar," Ethel said. "The new steward was taking it from the cabin to the galley when—" but she didn't finish the sentence. They were quiet for a few moments while Hall taking the cork from the bottle sniffed and then decided to empty the contents on the sand. It was or had been vinegar, and there was only a little at the bottom of the container.

Ethel broke the silence.

"Why not send a message by the train that brought you in?" she cried.

"Not bad," answered Hall. "But what about ink and paper and pen. I'm afraid we are a little shy of stationery."

"Any films in your kodak?" Ethel asked, recalling that it had been hung up in the shak a long time.

"Guess so," said Hall. "Made some pictures on the Hollins. I seem to remember that it was at six

when I started on deck in the storm. The case was supposed to be waterproof."

"You can photograph sand" said the woman, "and grass and leaves; why not writing—messages?"

That same day, when the sun had slanted to the west and the tide was far out a message was carefully written on the sand, and two snapshots were taken of it, at slightly different angles and after careful adjustment of the view-finder. That was two films added to the roll inside the tight little box—then four pictures were taken of the "inhabitants." The message was a work of art—with a stick—for much must be said in small space—it read:

TO WHOEVER FINDS THIS DEMI-JOHN:
PLEASE SEND SOMEONE TO RESCUE JOHN
AND ETHEL HALL, MAROONED ON THE ISLE
OF SOMEWHERE, LAT. ABOUT 160, LONG. 10;
SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN; NEAR FIJI OR SA-
MOAN ISLANDS. PAY NO ATTENTION TO
PREVIOUS FILMS TAKEN ABOARD BR. BK.
E. M. HOLLINS WHICH FOUNDERED NEAR
THIS ISLAND, JULY 4, 19—. WE ARE WELL
AND HAPPY BUT LONG FOR THE WORLD.

J. AND E. H.

The little spool of films went neatly into the mouth of the big, wicker-covered bottle and after being balasted with sand and the little pin and flag set tightly into the well-driven cork, the messenger was launched at high tide and floated, right side up, out of sight.

*

*

*

*

Winter weather in 19— had brought northern yachtsmen to Miami, Florida, and among the handsome pleasure craft lying at the club docks a few days before Christmas none was more attractive than the trim and capable steam yacht bearing the rather queer name of The Hiccoughs. Captain (Doctor) McGinnis, the owner, who had made millions selling a certain, well-advertised, cure-all, was on board and with his friend Prof. Disbrow, was this particular morning discussing the weather and the stock market when two small boys in a dory hailed them as they sat on the after deck.

"See what we got, Pop!" said the youngster in the bow, pointing to a tow.

"Very good," said Prof. Disbrow; "But what have you got? Is it Medford rum or something?"

"It's a bottle with a flag," said the boy in the stern who was holding it by a rope, "an' it's got something in it."

Anything to kill time is the motto with some folks, and the boy's capture or discovery made an excuse for going below and getting the demi-john aboard. It was opened and upset, and out came the beach sand and—a tiny roll of kodak films—on a spool.

"Now this is exciting," declared the Doctor; and the junior Disbrow immediately pounced upon the roll and desired that it be investigated.

"You see what it is about; won't you, Pop? Maybe it's a picture of a seaserpent, or sumpin'."

At dinner that night on board the yacht Prof. Disbrow, camera fiend and expert, exhibited enlarged prints from the originals in the bottle. The pictures were excellent, he said; but very small, and so he had used the apparatus on board and enlarged the prints—the message coming out wonderfully. It was variously received.

"Just a hoak somebody is playing," said the professor. "No doubt it was sent overboard from some rum-runner, to give the finder a laugh. All bottles

with messages direct the finders to communicate with Mrs. Higginbottam, 39½ Umpstein Street, Oskosh, or thereabouts. This one doesn't refer to anybody."

"Maybe it's genuine," said the Doctor. "Just think. Perhaps these people are really waiting to be rescued! I say, why not go and look for them?"

"Of all the foolish things—" began Mrs. Disbrow, to be shut off rather abruptly by Prof. Disbrow, who was enjoying his stay on the Hiccoughs.

"Why not," said Mrs. McGinnis, deciding to be different and with a very, very slight knowledge of geography. "I think it would be rather a nice little trip. But what does "Lat. 160 mean?"

"Well, folks," continued the amiable Doctor, dodging the question. "We honestly haven't anything particular to do for the next few months—wouldn't it be rather good to go poking around in the South Seas? Had sort o' made plans for Norway; but hang the cold stuff. I'm for a warm climate and plenty of thrills. Will you go, Professor?"

"Count me in," said Prof. Disbrow. "I can work out my problems one place as well as another. Say when you are ready. Next week if you please."

It took more than a week, however, to get ready for a voyage such as in view—but millionaires get what they want, usually. Doctor McGinnis had the money, and the rest came fairly easy. In three weeks the Hiccoughs was heading south; through the canal and again turning southward.

* * * *

"Hello there!" said the man in the bow of a launch that grounded on a shelving beach, some weeks later.

The salutation was extended to a small, brown, perfect copy of Dan Cupid who stood with his chubby toes just beyond the swirl and eyed the newcomers. Sans clothes and devoid of guile the youngster fairly challenged the men who sprang overboard and made for the sand.

"Hello, yo'self" responded the boy in the birthday suit.

"Where is this, anyway," added the man. "Who lives here?"

The blue eyes fairly sparkled and showing a fine lot of white teeth in a smile, the little fellow pointed inland, saying:

"We lives here, an' it's the Isle of Somewhere and belongs to my mamma and pappa."

Doctor McGinnis and Prof. Disbrow had come ashore, and following the little fellow, they met, on the way, John and Ethel Hall. The islanders were in quaint costumes; considerably more elaborate than that worn by their son, yet unconventional. There was a look of joy on the faces of the grown-ups that showed how necessary it is for human beings to be "in the world," and with but little delay the party embarked for The Hiccoughs, which was lying off a mile or two from shore.

*

*

*

*

On the way back to civilization the castaways told of their experiences and rejoiced that they would again be among people. The grass suits were quickly exchanged for clothing loaned by those who had come to the rescue—while John, junior, was spoiled irretrievably, perhaps, by the women of the party.

"John Hall," said the Doctor, on the after deck one afternoon soon after the boat had headed north. "Why don't you quit rambling around and write advertising copy?"

"Got a job for me?" was the Yankee comeback.

"Surest thing," said the master of The Hiccoughs. "I need new ideas to get my latest discovery into general use. It's a new compound discovered during my recent cruise in the Pacific—that's the way I mean to spread it around, you know—something I bought or took from a Fiji—get the notion? . . . It of course will be one of my old recipes that has served well in many years and under various titles. . . . Harmless and therefore effective. . . You could boost that to a fare-ye-well I believe . . . You know a lot about water and bottles."

WHEN DEPARTED SPIRITS STAGED A RETURN

Passengers on the Southbound limited looking out of the Pullman windows as the train halted a few miles from Charleston, noticed a group of men standing near the baggage car. It was about 9.30 A. M. and the day was midsummer in the early nineties. A minute later the very well understood "long box" was carefully taken from the car, tenderly placed in a waiting vehicle, and a little procession followed as the way was made down Cemetery lane. It was at Magnolia Crossing, a junction point on the Southern Railway, almost opposite the beautiful and famous Magnolia Cemetery.

The quiet, well-dressed men and the wagon with the long box disappeared between the rows of trees as the train moved off again.

"Some poor fellow who died far from home has been brought back to rest in his beloved Carolina," remarked the lady in section 7 who had been one of the observers of the ceremony. There were tears of sympathy in her voice.

"Yes," responded the elderly man in number 9 who had been friendly and chatty since meeting at breakfast. "I have often seen notices in the News and Courier which told of the death of someone and added 'interment at Magnolia on the arrival of the morning train'."

"Their spirits follow them, no doubt," resumed the lady, with just a suggestion of a sniff. "Under the great oaks they will await judgment day peacefully and calm."

Twelve hours later the same group of mourners returned from Charleston to the grave so carefully filled in the morning—to reopen it and with very little care and no ceremony at all, take from the

long box about twenty cases of whiskey, the same delivered to customers between midnight and sunrise. The "departed spirits" had been recovered, very active and saleable.

South Carolina politicians were trying to make a good thing out of her liquor business.

* * * *

During a session of the legislature, near the end of Ben Tillman's last term as governor, a foxy member had convinced the chief that an army of henchmen could be formed by creating a lot of new and easy jobs. It would help Tillman's campaign for Senator to have a few hundred or thousand men on the state payrolls who would be without responsibility and perhaps in a position to graft extensively. Fanatics had been doing their annual stunt of trying to push over a prohibition bill, and the schemer, on advice from the governor, clipped the heading from the bill and inserted under the title something that proposed to set up a state scheme for liquor sales and regulations. It included details somewhat like this:

All liquors, wines and beer to be sold by the state.

A big rum mill to be set up at Columbia from which supplies would be distributed to county agencies.

All liquor sold in county shops by county agents.

A constabulary empowered with unusual authority to seize and send to headquarters all liquors found anywhere except in the county dispensaries and to arrest sellers or those transporting liquor.

A few restrictions were suggested as to hours of sale, registry of purchaser, limit of sales and quality of goods handled.

"Governor," I said to Tillman at the capital in Columbia the night the bill was passed; "are you going to sign that bill?"

"Of course I'm going to sign it. The people *want* it—why shouldn't I sign it."

And he knew, and I knew, that "the people" hadn't any clear idea of what it was all about. The prohibitionists had asked for prohibition, for years and rather well knew that they would not get it; those opposed to the interference of government into matters of habit and appetite were opposed to the original bill, and had it sidetracked when the operation was performed and it was railroaded through committees and house and senate as approved by the governor.

Then came the deluge.

Two Tillman battalions were then quickly formed. One composed of strong supporters of the Tillman Farmers' *Move-ment*, was designated as officials and dispensers. The other division included the enforcement officers—the spies as they were quickly named and proved to be; and all the friends and hangers-on and relatives of the new appointees were more insolubly bound to Tillman and his fancies. The new officials were carefully chosen from the rural districts mainly and the "wool hat" and nonedescript clothing became symbolical of the Dispensary spy thereafter.

The spies, it could be said right here, were smart enough in their bucolic way and very soon learned the lessons of collecting from all law violators who would pay them and arresting and harrassing those who were so foolish as to defy "the law." There were some decent men in the "constabulary" as formed under the Dispensary Law, but the average was slightly above the cut-throat.

The big gin mill at Columbia was soon set up and started on full time. Liquor dealers had been given short notice of the changes and while many disposed of their stocks at auction or otherwise, the majority

of places merely set up a pretense and continued to sell as before. County dispensaries were established in towns and cities and "neighborhoods," and when manned by good politicians of the Tillman stripe and all goods attractively displayed they started in to handle business with a rush.

Adjoining states naturally took notice of this political experiment that was being undertaken and it was to be expected that the "human element" would manifest itself very soon. Opposition to the state plan was quickly developed, and the ingenuity of clever people almost instantly began to show its evasions and violations.

Those South Carolinians who believed that they should dictate what others could do in the way of eating and drinking wanted the law enforced, to the letter—except of course, in no way interfering with themselves. Other people decided they would have their liquor, wine and beer, when and where and as they pleased.

For a year or two the fight was on in earnest. The Tillman armies grew and followers of the "*move-ment*" increased.

During the first year of the Dispensary law excitement citizens of Darlington, a pretty town in the upper part of the state, decided they didn't like the way the constables were carrying on, and they treated several of them "real rough" and scared others into fleeing without even waving their adieus. Tillman called out the militia and practically put Darlington under martial law for a week or two.

Not all the state troops took kindly to a call that had been made to defend a lot of cowardly spies and the Charleston contingent flatly refused to go. This created a lot of talk. In fact there came a sad day in the old City by the Sea when, at the governor's orders, the arms were taken from three or four infantry companies and stored under guard—and organizations that had war records as fine as any troops of Lee or Grant were told to consider them-

selves disgraced. They did not, however, as Charleston thought very little of the Tillman *move-ment* and less of Tillman's Dispensary Law.

The constables or spies were later heavily armed and told to shoot whenever they deemed it expedient. It was mostly bluff and the spies found it much pleasanter to "enforce" where the enforcing was easy and to collect where the collections were good.

I had a talk with one of the spies who had "taken to the woods" after the demonstration at Darlington. The uprising, by the way, came about through rough or brutal treatment of men and women suspected of violating the Dispensary Law. If I am not mistaken a woman was insulted and abused by a "constable" or several of them, and the citizens decided to handle the Tillmanites without gloves. Then the stampede and the call for help and the summons of the state troops. . . The man was badly "rattled," but not really hurt. He had spent a night or two in the swamps and made up his mind to quit the job. . . . Later, when safely in Charleston and no doubt figuring out the possibilities, he decided to stay with the Dispensary crowd. I think he later retired to a farm, bought on his small salary and a few tips, perhaps.

Up at the head rum mill in Columbia hundreds of men and women were busy from the first putting liquor into flasks and bottles and shipping it to the county dispensaries. The Palmetto tree, proud emblem of the state, was blown into the bottles, and the label indicated inspection and a gurantee of purity. It became notorious that the seized liquor was dumped into a vat and rebottled; never inspected and sent out as fast as possible to keep up with the lowest class of demand.

I recall a sign, posted in front of an East Bay dispensary in Charleston during that first year; it said:

11 cents corn
One X.
Has Come.

The import was that consignments of the rottenest, cheapest grade of corn whiskey, selling for eleven cents a pint, had arrived from Columbia after a shortage created the day before. The negro laborers on the wharves showed a preference for this brand and size and the dispenser was looking for business.

Meanwhile the spies raided and grafted and got into occasional scraps with city people and villagers. The old saloons became "blind tigers," and the average keeper was far-seeing enough to hand out from \$5 to \$50 a week to the constable who was assigned to his territory. Places that did not contribute to the spies were raided, daily, hourly, nightly—anytime at all. And they were usually doing business half an hour after a visit from the spies. . . I have stood at the counter in a "tiger" on Bay Street, Charleston and noted the drinks going over steadily while the spies were working in the next room. Often there were two "tigers" with only a board partition between. Being "blind" of course they didn't see each other.

The only thing that caused any comment regarding the spies was the way they seemed to change; one would get some money from somewhere and buy a farm; of course it might have been from savings of the \$40 a month salary paid by the state.

Charleston looks so quiet to the average visitor that one is surprised when anything suggests disturbances or carryings on not entirely conventional. Here some of the older families regarded the Dispensary Law a good thing for the reason that "it would keep the negro yard man from getting drunk and beating his wife." None of the elegant ladies and courtly gentlemen who discussed this possibility had ever personally known of such misconduct as

mentioned but they felt that it was a good thing "for the working classes." They never for one moment considered that anyone would ever presume to dictate to them what they should eat or drink. The very idea was preposterous!

"The best people" decided that the goods offered by the state dispensary were not to their taste. They had been buying from other states or agents and they continued to patronize anybody except the dispensers.

Blind tigers flourished. Agents from everywhere were soon on hand. They sold from a pint to a car-load and delivered it before asking for pay. The fruit stores, barber-shops, grocery shops, peanut stands—almost every small dealer undertook to sell something wet on the side, and there came to be a sort of sporting event in getting the drinks presumably "under cover." This was not very long an attraction—the general disregard of the law made it more of an event to buy something from the state than from a "tiger."

Dispensers tried to make big sales. I don't now remember whether or not they got a commission; think probably it was a straight salary—if anything could ever have been straight connected with the infamous system. . . But finding that old bottles, refilled with half the contents of a new bottle would sell very well there was a chance of something extra. Then there was the regular charge for breakage and loss in transit. . . The sales were made at all hours regardless of regulations; they were made, by these state agents, to minors and drunkards and in quantity to suit the demand.

When the Dispensary Law went into effect Charleston had about four hundred places where liquor or beer or wine, or all three could be purchased, legally. Licenses covered stores where liquor and wine was sold in bottles and cases, regular saloons, restaurants, hotels, and other places, and things were getting along fairly well. No crime waves

had been noted in many years, if ever. But the new law started things up differently. There were thirteen county dispensaries established by the state in Charleston.

And the spies kept on spying.

Within a year there were known to be about twelve hundred places in Charleston and the immediate vicinity where liquor or beer could be bought, day or night.

But the constabulary soon lost prestige in the matter of making big money with their line of graft.

The business of the dispensary system was conducted at first by a board and later by a commission, and here were opportunities for getting rich quick which were not overlooked. . . . Men appointed to the positions at the head or in the management of the dispensary were lauded to the skies when taking office as Christian gentlemen and later kicked out as grafters deserving jail sentences. . . . An investigation of headquarters affairs held some time during the last spasms of the system showed that money and every other form of bribe had been handed to those in authority for favors. . . . A pitiful tale I recall was that of a member of the board of control who had spied on other members in conference with a distillery agent and noted the "hatfulls of money" given for their influence (and orders). The spying member was mad because he did not get his share.

A statement was made by the representative of a big distilling company under examination, which was to the effect that the carload of whiskey sent to the state dispensary on order of a member of the board was "so rotten we expected it would be returned," but they paid the board member a thousand dollars to pass it, and the customers perhaps got along somehow believing that if it came from the dispensary it must be good.

An incident of dispensary regime was the disciplining of Charleston because so many people there declined to drink the state booze. Governor Evans

who succeeded Tillman when the latter went to the senate to establish his pitchfork reputation, decided sometime during the game that the biggest city in South Carolina was not showing proper respect to Tillmanism and the state capital, so he placed Charleston under what was called "metropolitan police." This was practically military authority, for the chief reported to the governor, and the mayor and city council had no authority whatever in regard to bluecoats on the streets. The people really worried very little over this supposed "disgrace" and kept right along with their work and play—and scorn for the state liquor shops.

A member of the board of control came to Charleston to tell the folks what could be done to restore them to favor at headquarters. . . I called on him at the principal hotel that night and listened to his orations, while he stalked about the room and posed and smoked—and every now and then rang the bell and ordered cocktails from the hotel bar, three flights down. . . . Yes, I helped him drink the cocktails. . . Martinis never did a newspaper man any harm, and it was all in the day's work with me. . . . He urged that the mayor of Charleston and some other dignitaries come up to the big dispensary, to talk with him. . . and they did . . . and the big story about that meeting was headed "they opened court with a drink." While the Charleston officials were waiting to plead for authority to regulate their city affairs the board members had the drinks sent in from the bottling room.

Some sad-hearted onlookers from a distance thought that Charleston really should behave better—like the rural districts, they said. But this was all hokum. A tour with candidates and newspaper men about the state that first summer of dispensary rule discovered the state shops and blind tigers working about the same everywhere; the proportions were different of course, but few places seemed willing to use the state grog exclusively. . . One

place I remember meeting an old friend and with the usual inquiry as to early and excellent refreshment he took me to the Y. M. C. A. building where we found another friend with a quart, and used the water glass from the cooler for service.

On a little boat going from Georgetown to Conway the party numbered about twenty, much too many for the small cabin, and somewhat inconvenienced by rain. But the abundance of blind tiger liquor on board prevented any trouble.

The campaigning party was delayed one day and expecting to reach a town after closing hours for the dispensary, a telegram from a prominent candidate secured the necessary liquid refreshment, at the depot. The dispensers tried to make sales—and all the “moral restrictions and limitations were forgotten very soon after the performance began.

Charleston continually figured in the newspapers during Dispensary days. An Italian named Vincent Chicco who had at one time been a policeman, decided that he would go into the restaurant business along about that time and his place on Market Street became famous for the spaghetti and good beer served at reasonable prices. Chicco was a fine cook. He was also a very cheery talker and represented something over six feet of good nature, cunning and native wit. He was willing to feed and give drinks to the dispensary spies, but refused to pay them with his hard earned money. . . As a result he was harrassed unmercifully. They raided his place day and night, in season and out—but he bobbed up after each raid with supplies from somewhere and an unruffled disposition.

Everybody knew Chicco. Thousands of people liked his spaghetti and beer and the big, fat, merry Italian was acquitted as often as case was made out against him in court. The spies seemed to think that it was good advertising to raid Chicco's place, and he seemed to be able to stand it. . . In fact Chicco became a national figure through this apparent per-

secution, and probably enjoyed it. . . . Some wag suggested to Chicco that he have a cigar named for himself and the design was audacious, but nobody cared. . . It was a matter of two photographs, side by side, one of Chicco and the other of Tillman—Ben (Pitchfork) Tillman—and underneath the legend "The Two Determined."

Chicco visited New York on one occasion afterwards and having dropped in at a little joint somewhere in the Italian quarter was gathered in when the police dragged the net looking for trouble, or something. Anyway the outlook seemed to be dull for the visitor when awaiting assignment to quarters in jail but he decided to speak up, anyway.

"Say chief," he said to the lieutenant in charge of the station, "you ought not keep me here; I'm Chicco, from Charleston."

"Not Chicco,—one of the two determined!" exclaimed the desk sergeant, coming out and looking him over. . . And the next thing producing from his desk the cover of a cigar box with the pictures—a souvenir brought home by the officer from a southern trip. . . Identity established the King of the Bling Tigers was not only released but practically given the keys to the big city.

Charleston has always been unique. Her officials have always been men of ability, although differing as the campaigns come and go, in the position they hold in society. One of the mayors, during the dispensary period decided that the city was losing money on the game and felt that something should be done. It had been shown that there was not the slightest possibility of enforcing the dispensary law, and the blind tigers being well known to the police it was decided that each proprietor be summoned every three months and docketed as violating the city ordinances in regard to sale of liquor. The papers were served, the men came to the police station, each deposited fifty dollars and failed to appear in court the next day. It was a highly satis-

factory way of collecting \$200 a year from the tiger keepers and added very acceptably to the city's finances.

Naturally the state constables made "cases" against violators of the dispensary law. That was at least a part of their business. The spies were grouped about in towns and cities and occasionally went into the woods and the rural sections. In a place like Charleston there were a dozen spies stationed, with a chief in general charge. Complaints were made to the circuit court after the arrest of violators and as bail was always available there was seldom any overcrowding of jails. But the cases were presented to the grand jury in batches, and as regularly thrown out.

At the Charleston County Court House at Meeting and Broad Streets where the first capital of Carolina stood, years and years before, I heard the foreman of a grand jury address the circuit judge:

"Your honor;" he said, (and he was a splendid citizen; veteran of the sixties with oak leaves on his Confederate uniform at the surrender and later serving faithfully in the blue uniform in the engineer department during the Spanish-American war) "we are returning 'no bill' in several hundred cases of alleged violation of the dispensary law. Indictments were asked by the constabulary now in this county and we find that they are men totally unfit for confidence or belief. They admit drunkenness; they are accused by each other of taking bribes; they are doubtful as to facts and contradict themselves and each other. We will not put citizens of Charleston county in jeopardy on the strength of such testimony."

And that was the way the story went during the efforts made by politicians to regulate and direct the appetites of the citizens of a great state through schemes and laws and spying and intimidation.

Later the dispensary law was wiped off the books of South Carolina laws and prohibition was enacted.

The form followed was "local option" for awhile, with allowances for individual importation of a reasonable quantity of liquor, which seemed to be accepted by a large proportion of the people.

I don't know what is going on in that state now, under Federal prohibition, but I suspect that the Carolinaians continue to believe that any restrictive law is intended to regulate "the common people" and does not apply to them. . . They have always done about as they pleased. . . I admire their spunk and insistence of the rights guaranteed by the original constitution. If every state in the union had the backbone and grit of the Carolinaians it would be a fine country indeed.

THE END

